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Executive Summary

Variation in Access to Care for Low-Income Children with Public Coverage:

Baseline Findings from the 2002/2003
Los Angeles County Health Survey

Prepared for:



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Children's Health Initiative of Greater Los Angeles

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A Baseline Analysis with the 2002/2003 Los Angeles County Health Survey

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Since 2003, the Children's Health Initiative of Greater Los Angeles has sought to reduce uninsurance rates among children in Los Angeles County. Using the 2002/2003 Los Angeles County Health Survey to examine the variation in health care access and use among children with public coverage prior to the Initiative, it appears that certain subgroups are experiencing problems. The Children's Health Initiative of Greater Los Angeles will not have as great an impact on improving children's health unless these barriers are addressed.

Results

This analysis focuses exclusively on low-income children with family incomes under 200 percent of the federal poverty level that have public coverage through Medi-Cal or Healthy Families.

Child's Citizenship Status

- The single biggest differentiating factor affecting access to care.
- Nearly four out of 10 non-citizen children — 38 percent — reported difficulty accessing needed medical care compared to only 17 percent of their citizen counterparts.
- Cost concerns are a factor. For example, 20 percent of non-citizen children could not afford a medical check-up compared to 7 percent of their citizen counterparts.
- Likewise, non-citizen children were less likely to have a usual source of care than their citizen counterparts.

Child's Health Status

- Children in fair or poor health had more difficulty accessing needed medical care than did children in better health.

- Children in fair or poor health were over twice as likely to have unmet prescription drug needs compared to children in better health (20 percent vs. 8 to 10 percent).
- It is possible that some of these unmet needs affect the child's health status.

Child's Age

- Children between the ages of 12 and 17 were more likely to have unmet health care needs and were less likely to have received a well-child exam than their younger counterparts.

Parental Mental Health

- Consistent with other studies, we found that 25 percent of children with depressed parents were reported to have difficulty accessing needed medical care compared to only 14 percent of children whose parents were not depressed.

Income

- Poor children — those with family incomes below the federal poverty line — were more likely to experience transportation and language barriers when trying to obtain needed health care than near-poor children — those with family incomes at or up to twice the federal poverty line.



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Difficulties Accessing Care Among Low-Income Publicly Insured Children Ages 0-17 in L.A. County by Key Characteristics, 2002/2003

	Difficulty accessing needed care for child	Transportation barrier to medical care	Language barrier to medical care ¹
Child's Citizenship Status			
U.S. Citizen [^]	16.7%	9.8%	10.2%
Non-Citizen	38.4%***	17.6%**	24.3%***
Child's Health Status			
Excellent	13.7%***	8.3%***	4.9%***
Very Good	16.6%***	10.7%	6.2%***
Good	17.8%***	8.6%**	11.9%***
Fair/Poor [^]	27.3%	14.8%	24.6%
Child's Age			
0-5	16.5%	9.1%**	13.0%
6-11	19.9%	9.4%*	10.5%
12-17 [^]	18.8%	13.5%	10.1%
Parent's Mental Health Status²			
Depressed	25.1%***	15.3%***	18.9%***
Not Depressed [^]	14.2%	7.3%	6.8%
Family Income			
0 to 99% FPL	18.1%	12.5%***	13.4%***
100% to 199% FPL [^]	18.7%	7.8%	9.0%
Child's Race-Ethnicity			
Latino	19.0%	9.4%	13.4%***
White [^]	17.4%	13.6%	2.2%
African-American	11.7%	16.2%	0%
Asian-Pacific Islander	19.8%	11.2%	9.6%
Other	30.3%	21.1%	0%
Functional Limitations			
Yes	32.4%**	19.3%*	10.4%
No [^]	17.3%	9.6%	11.3%
Parent Citizenship			
U.S. Citizen [^]	14.9%	13.5%	3.9%
Non-Citizen	20.7%***	8.2%***	16.3%***
Parent Foreign-Born Status			
Foreign Born	19.9%***	8.6%***	14.8%***
U.S. Born [^]	13.9%	15.6%	0.8%
Marriage Status of Respondent			
Married [^]	19.3%	8.4%	13.9%
Not Married	17.1%	12.3%**	8.6%***

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	Difficulty accessing needed care for child	Transportation barrier to medical care	Language barrier to medical care
Parent's Education			
Less than High School	19.9%	9.4%	14.3%*
High School	15.1%	11.7%	8.1%
Some College or trade school	18.7%	12.6%	7.8%
College or Postgrad degree^	18.8%	7.8%	8.2%
Work Status of Respondent			
Employed	17.9%	8.9%	10.3%
Unemployed^	18.7%	11.4%	12.2%
Language of Interview			
English	14.0%***	14.7%***	---
Not English^	20.4%	8.3%	16.7%
Number of Children in Household			
2 or fewer	18.3%	9.9%	10.5%
3 or more^	18.5%	11.2%	13.0%
SPA			
Antelope Valley	16.3%	20.9%	8.6%
San Fernando	17.0%	11.1%	13.1%
San Gabriel	15.8%	8.1%	8.9%
Metro	24.9%	10.4%	11.0%
West^	17.9%	12.3%	8.5%
South	18.8%	9.3%	13.6%
East	15.9%	10.1%	12.1%
South Bay	19.1%	10.4%	9.5%

Source: Urban Institute tabulations of the 2002/2003 Los Angeles County Health Survey.

Notes: ¹ Only respondents who were interviewed in a non-English language received this question.

² The term "depressed" reflects the parent's reported general emotional state and does not necessarily indicate that the parent is clinically depressed.

^ Refers to the reference category

* p <.1, ** p <.05, *** p <.01.

To view the entire report visit www.calendow.org.



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